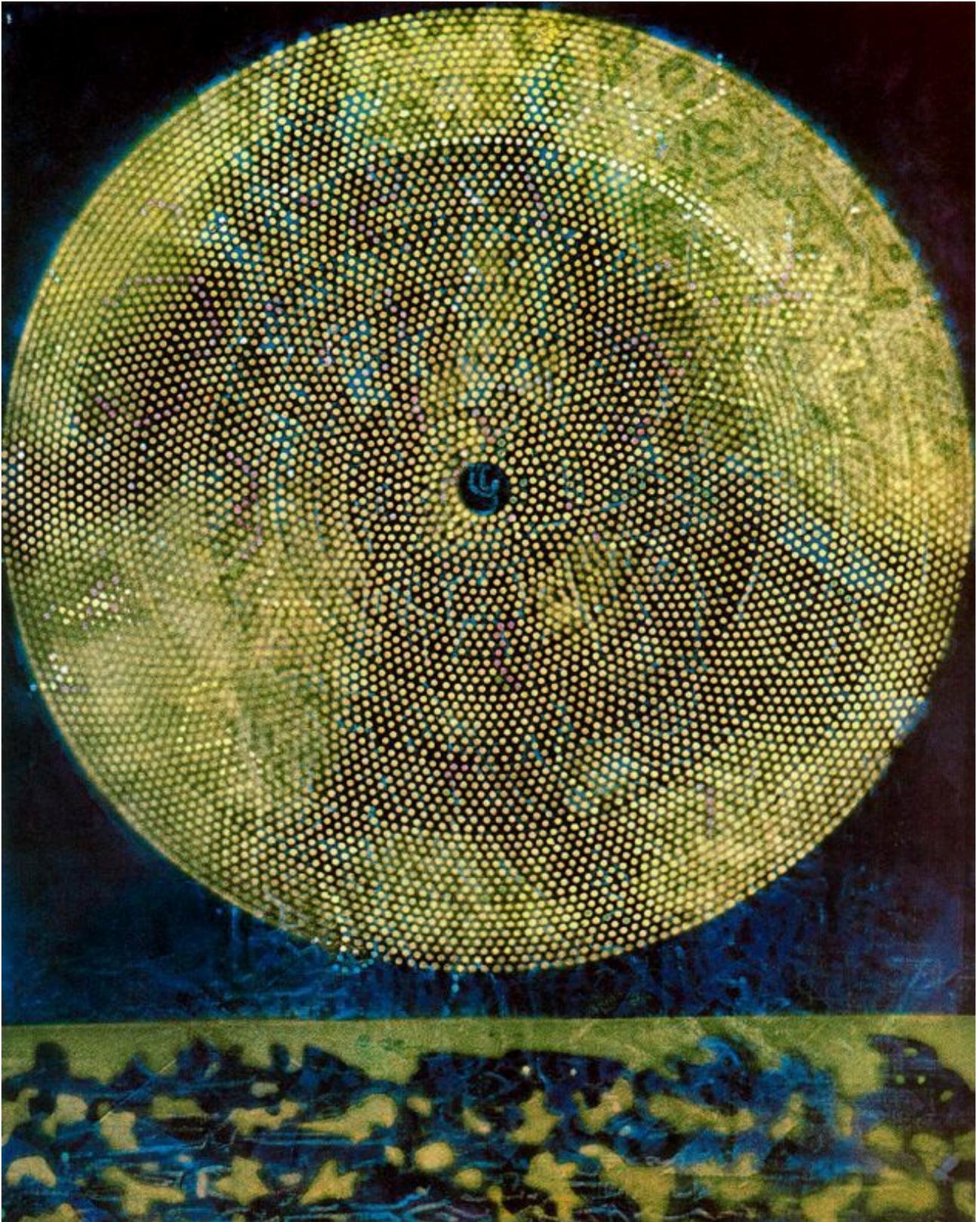


Isocritique

Isocritique: Minor Diagrams Towards a Critique of Speculative Reason

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Max Ernst, *Birth of a Galaxy* (1969)

Introduction

How to become a transcendental detective

Yet by this I do not understand a critique of books and systems, but a critique of the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all the cognitions after which reason might strive independently of all experience, and hence the decision about the possibility or impossibility of a metaphysics in general, and the determination of its sources, as well as its extent and boundaries, all, however, from principles.
(Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface (A), A xii)

This is the problematic which frames the first critique: How is synthetic knowledge a priori possible? Are there metaphysical propositions reason can know without the aid of experience ("independently of all experience")? Is there a metaphysical correlate of geometric figures and physical bodies, which can be known with the same universality and necessity that we find in the mathematical and physical sciences?

In the first critique, Kant shares case notes from his investigations into the borderlines of pure reason. A philosopher-detective has been tasked, by a tribunal of reason, with the investigation of a metaphysical crime. The case will be that of the illegal placement of synthetic a priori knowledge within the minds of thinking beings. Let's follow his hunt for transcendental clues.

The critical voyage

Here is the shape of the journey Kant embarks upon in the first critique. First Kant deduces the conditions of possible experience, that is Spacetime (exterior and interior sensibilities) and the Categories (of quantity, quality, relation, and modality). He shows how these are connected to one another, to form notions of the understanding. The notions are in turn conjoined and disjointed: syllogized and systematized, synthesized with other data, to assemble (or deduce) the ideas of reason. (Curiously the ideas reason arrives at cannot always themselves be understood, but rather are only able to be *used* -- having been arrived at through 'mechanical' operations of combination, iteration, etc.)

Kant wishes to unground dogmatic and skeptic alike. He asks what if anything could provide for the universality and necessity of first-order metaphysical claims about reality with the same inarguableness as mathematical proofs. But, after all, how could we call knowledge that which produces endless dissensus? In the celebrated antinomies we have a dramatic face-to-face encounter on each of the major problematic points (god/soul/genesis/freedom), compelling the skeptic and dogmatic to come before the tribunal of reason and present their cases side-by-side.

Both (skeptic and dogmatic accounts) will be rejected by the critical philosophy, in a way because of the symmetry of each of these accounts to the other. For if we can prove both a claim and its converse, we have demonstrated the inadequacy (inconsistency) of the system under which our proofs were constructed, unmasking at least some of our presumptions (at the very last, presumption of consistency of a given formal system.)

Nothing seems clearer than that between the two, one of whom asserts that the world has a beginning, and the other that it has no beginning but has existed from eternity, one of them has to be right. But if this is so, then because there is equal evidence on both sides, it is impossible ever to ascertain which side is right, and so the conflict drags on as before, even though the parties have been directed by the court of reason to hold their peace. (*ibid*, A501/B530)

With a genuinely novel critical model of reason itself, Kant will explain why these problematic points arise, attempting to isolate their transcendental structure, grounding these problematics as inevitable consequences of the combination of the (spatiotemporal) structure of experience with the various categorial logics (e.g., modality).

These problematic points are like natural illusions, or mirages on the plane of reason, to which any reasoner may fall victim, when naively combining the pure elemental components of experience in certain ways. *Both* the direct assertion of an inarguable knowledge of some purely metaphysical feature of the structure of reality *and* the denial that there is any such knowledge of reality at all, positive or negative... these will *each* be rejected as the dogmatic and skeptical errors, in favor of a critical reasoning-out of the conditions of experience (almost incidentally exposing the insufficiency of the first-order accounts.) The critical account consists then of an analysis of the conditions of possible experience, identifying transcendental elements whose universality and necessity equal that possessed by the constructions and derivations of the geometers and physicists. The critical philosophy then provides a deduction of the problematic points which predicts or accounts for their dichotomous structure (almost incidentally explicating the undeniable sociological fact of dissensus or bifurcation).

For Kant, to get to metaphysical knowledge that might be considered as universal and necessary, reason has to become critical, aware of the misunderstandings it is capable of, the limitations of its formal systems, the necessity for experiments. Painstaking effort is required to ascend towards conditions, navigation on more-than-speculative high seas, not guaranteed success even if regulated by rational critique. Kant's first analytic machine, the transcendental aesthetic, operates a maximized abstraction, a total event- or object-reduction which leaves behind nothing but pure forms. These forms of space or time are ineradicable from phenomena, and even in thought inseparable from the notion of possible experience. This process is almost an empirical *reductio*: a successive removal of properties from objects and events in the imagination, deconstituting empirical content to extract phenomenological forms or categorial universals, these transcendental conditions of any possible experience whatsoever.

The conditions of experience implicate the (discoverable) consistency of a world and the (potential) decidability of ontological relations within it. This conditional line is the narrow opening through which criticism bypasses first-order metaphysical claims. The critical philosophy derives a new speculative line of escape to follow, neutralizing the endless (dogmatic-skeptic) conflict. Instead of interminable speculation on that which is indeterminate, we can extract transcendental features or traits to explain the foreclosure, deduce the irresolvable point and identify the shape of the dialectical illusions which converge around it.

The tower of pre-critical reason

Kant presents an image of pre-critical reason as a tower of Babel stretching to the sky. He implicitly positions the critical philosophy as an alternative means of sound cognitive architecture:

If I regard the sum total of all cognition of pure and speculative reason as an edifice for which we have in ourselves at least the idea, then I can say that in the Transcendental Doctrine of Elements we have made an estimate of the building materials and determined for what sort of edifice, with what height and strength, they would suffice. It turned out, of course, that although we had in mind a tower that would reach the heavens, the supply of materials sufficed only for a dwelling that was just roomy enough for our business on the plane of experience and high enough to survey it; however that bold undertaking had to fail from lack of material, not to mention the confusion of languages that unavoidably divided workers over the plan and dispersed them throughout the world, leaving each to build on his own according to his own design. (ibid, A707/B735)

The tower indicates how both direct connections to transcendence or immanence are barred to the critical philosophy. The internally-dissenting logic of the pre-critical tower has to be decomposed, and the space of reason reconstructed without including indeterminate points of transcendence *or* immanence (since the *a priori* also cannot stem from direct consideration of the immanent plane of experience.)

The tower functions as a vehicle for rational systems, and stands in for their architecture or "architectonic", the way in which systems and syllogisms synthetically link up or hang-together.

The trial

How can we form extended principled arguments in pure metaphysics, that is: construct arguments that have the same universality and necessity as the Pythagorean theorem, or the Newtonian laws of motion? (In this question is the life and death of metaphysics, according to Kant...) The critical philosophy investigates the answer to this problem: how metaphysicians could ever be able to conduct the same sort of sure and steady syntheses as geometers and physicists, who possess the advantage of bringing along with each of their propositions a chain of deductions, following a formal mechanism for reproducing their truth reliably.

Kant concludes that because we have no direct access to things-in-themselves (both transcendence and immanence barred as dogmatic and skeptical errors) we must instead analyze the *conditions* of experience. By systematically dismantling possible experiences, we find the pure forms of space and time in the well-known transcendental aesthetic. In combination with the transcendental logic of the categories, thought assembles the notions of the understanding which will in turn be grounds for *rational* cognition of the ideas. The transcendental ideas of reason are regulative but not, as Kant says, constitutive: they themselves cannot be used to stitch together pure syntheses, because they are dialectical.

Nevertheless the ideas of pure reason function like singular points of the problematic field of reason; they are the synthetic objects of the antinomies: god, the soul, genesis and freedom. They may all be derived in turn from the spacetime and the categories placed into conjunction or combination. For instance: the problematic of genesis may be understood as a consequence of one of the categories, in this case quantity, being conjoined to an aspect of spacetime, or temporality, as formulated concretely in the curious question, "how far back does time extend?" whose opposing solutions (a finite duration, eternity) the antinomy elaborates. The ideas of pure reason are dialectical so reasonable arguments can be made on both sides of the problematic points, hence the truth of these points is not decidable by pure reason alone. In a movement of stepping back from first-order metaphysics, Kant famously wishes to "leave room for faith". The critical philosophy is as much not-skeptical as it is not-dogmatic; it is instead transcendental, enchanted with the purity of abstraction even as it regulates and judges existence.

The courthouse, the tribunal, the critical apparatus of a philosophical trial: all this appears to be a disappointing answer to the initial problem in a way. There are certain points that we cannot answer definitively, although it is also not enough to say that they are ineffable. We must try to explicate the inconsistency. For these are problems created by reason, so reason must answer for having produced them. This is a refrain of the critique, that reason must begin to *answer for* its long errors and dispute, and to explain in detail why it is impossible that thinking should be able to approach the problematic points without illusion or error. What is the new relationship, constructed during the Enlightenment, between individual freedom and scientific experimentation? What moves us towards this luminous height, towards the open development of new collective capacities? What grounds this good faith use of formal reason in life, culture, politics? A critical Enlightenment moves inexorably *against* the moment — entering into combat with bad faith and long errors.

How to navigate in thinking?

We discover in Kant a novel apparatus, a critical movement in thought towards its own analysis and freedom at once: the self-guided unfolding and determination of reason. This movement of pure reason operates on a different order than the intuition and even the understanding. Nevertheless it is an active, determinate traversal of a strategic space by trial. (It sometimes seems that the critique attempts to make a scientific instrument of the ancient method of division, in its way a similar conquering of virtual space by trial division...) Thinking is an experimental navigation, according to and resulting in a synthesis (from syllogisms up to systems.) Cautious but self-guided, pure reason is capable of confident synthetic movement on the plane under certain conditions, when avoiding disaster... Ratiocination carves an experimental trajectory: a crucial cognitive movement through a condensed matrix of rational relations. Pure reason synthesizes *over* systems...

The critique traces the dynamics of the *topological relations* within the virtual space of rational construction on the plane. The speculative high seas of pure reason are made navigable only when reasons becomes critical, crucial, capable of not just assertion and denial but finally of *determining a definite experiment* (to facilitate performing a deduction or Decision...) In criticality, thinking becomes the material evidence of a trial. As it undergoes this critical trial, the plane of reason unfolds or becomes involutive. Transcendental lines contract thinking into a synthetic black hole, into a singularity capable of being deduced. Critical reason maps out the problematic points which will distort the entire field.

One core operation of Kant's first critique is the establishment of zones of protection or control around these problematic points (freedom, god, the soul, genesis). Nevertheless it is hard not to see that these points are inexhaustible sources of singularity and transformation for reason. The critical philosophy aims on the one hand to detach from the dialectical illusions generated by these troublesome points — but on the other hand it aims to perform a transcendental deduction of the entire field of reason, approaching the entire problem more cautiously and from a different direction. How to decompose the directions-in-motion of this new trajectory of pure reason as it becomes itself transcendental? We here attempt to perform a critical experiment to isolate the "Kant effect". We want to follow this movement of reason as it unfolds a system of syllogisms onto the plane "through" which it moves (ascending towards principles, or descending toward consequences...)

Legal revolution

Kant has a moment in the *Critique* where he calls out the bad faith of those who want to abandon responsibility for the singular problematic points (of god, the soul, freedom, genesis) — saying that they are ineffable, etc. Instead Kant explains that precisely these are the questions which

reason *must answer for*, since it has created them. Moreover once we detach from the illusions haunting these points, we can take another approach: transcendently *deducing* these problems as singular combinations of transcendental abstracta, as fusional momenta of the categories and spacetimes.

We want to follow this movement which attaches spacetimes to categorealities. We want to catch sight of the emergence of ratiocination.

The first critique is an account of universal psychogenesis according to a logico-aesthetic model (that of categoreal spacetime)... Perhaps in its way it prefigures a science of mind to come, a science of images of thought; at the luminous limit of this series, a science of constructing scientific minds: an *automatic science*. (Today speculative reason encounters its estranged synthetic clone, i.e., the swiftly-accelerating capabilities of general-purpose computation... Was synthesis always an artificiality within reason itself? The movement of abstract formal systems towards their own auto-development? —In the light of programmable reason, what is the relation between synthesis and speculation?)

Our freedom depends on strategic use of reason. How can our thought become *worthy* of freedom? This is in a way the central problem of Enlightenment, part of the motivation for its ethos of autonomous experimentation.

The critiques would have a world-historical destiny: they were to *revolutionize the law*. Today, at the distance of centuries, nearly all legislative and governmental machinery bears the unmistakable signs of the critical philosophy. In the first critique Kant speaks of the secret to simplifying the law:

It is an ancient wish — who knows how long it will take until perhaps it is fulfilled — that in place of the endless manifold of civil laws, their principles may be sought out; for in this alone can consist the secret, as one says, of simplifying legislation. (*ibid*, B358/A302)

Kant dreams of reducing or minimizing the law, extracting transcendental principles from which more complex decision-structures can be elaborated, so that specific cases might follow incontrovertibly from a minimal axiomatic core. Through Kant the laws gain a new *interiority*.

Kantian Arrows

Minor critical diagrams; or a sketch of prioritizing forces.

1.

All laws are equal. There is an isonomic quality to every critical analysis. This quality corresponds to a power of navigation at sea, and presumes an ability and willingness to immigrate, to undergo movement between divided polities (becoming-stranger). There are undoubtedly a whole (further) series of conditions enabling this passage-as-a-power — *isolated populations*, dots on the plane of the sea, each with their own ways of feeling, their laws and music. The conditions of freedom of thought are strategic and logistical, involving lawful passage between waypoints, the avoidance of disastrous vortices, to safely navigate the archipelago of pure reason. These conditions are historical and genealogical too since the archipelago must already exist, the plane of reason must be inhabited; that is, first-order metaphysics must exist in many different varieties. It is this *open manifold of perspectives* which permits a critical step back. The conditions for critical thinking are immediately those of the freedom of thought: the right of transit through the isolated polities

which populate the plane of reason. And nothing guarantees even a critical philosophy success, we have simply made certain speculative passages a little safer — even with every precaution taken, you are entering the high seas. You have entered an ocean of virtual movements. (On the one hand, the sea is an extension into strategic space and so you risk every negative military outcome, from takeover to subversion... Yet on the other hand, this sea is the fluidity of thought itself, and in a way even a kind of memory bank or archive, so that all the theoretical risks attend us too: from those as basic as losing the way, all the way through data-corruption to madness.)

2.

Universal history of implication. Entailment, or the *feeling* of that one point follows another. A feeling about the conditions of truth; that the table is soundly constructed. It is not simply that there is an affect correlative with logical implication; rather we must follow implications in order to achieve coherent representations at all: entailment conditions the subjective condensation of time (successive experiences/problems/points) by subjecting understanding to a formal schema — a hypothetical de-conditioning which extracts a line of premises ascending towards the heights, and a darkening cloud of consequences, whose very opacity threatens disaster (inconsistency...) — Material implication, or rather its truth-table, is undoubtedly itself derivable from a certain *feeling of entailment*. —There is the construction of flat models, ordered tables of laws in Kant; in particular this production of a table of laws for thought (that through the transcendental seeks the same formal universality and necessity as the laws of physics or the principles of geometry.) The truth-table is a transcendental matrix. Within natural (everyday) languages we find a more supple sense of implication and entailment that corresponds only partially to the truth-table for material implication. Yet within logic itself, there is the strange logical/meta-logical gap between implication and entailment (that is, there are two distinct operators: *implies* and *therefore*; material implication and proof-theoretic entailment.) —Entailment is divided from within itself between the formal and the material. The logic of the real which conditions material in the last instance is itself not implicated by anything. Any metaphysical boundaries of thought will have been artificial, synthesized in order to permit the smooth delineation of thought's passage in the first place. The hanging-together of rational systems depends on inter-syllogistic relations; but there are also intra- or trans-syllogistic movements, disjunctions and resonances *between* strands of thought. Complexes of (entailment) threads must be pulled apart to extract transcendental isomorphies or pure categorial lines guaranteeing passage (provided certain fortunate conditions are met.) —A system cannot be constructed all at once; but neither can they be put together piece-by-piece and then assembled. There are strange temporal paradoxes around the origins (here both of pure logic and of perceptual sensibilities): each of the antimonies bears the mark of this problem of the inconsistency of the ontological foundations of the rational ideals. —Kant does not attempt a global topological ordering of the faculties; rather the way they appear is precisely the order in which they are necessary for explication, in this case for isolating the line of (space)time which divides a subject and turns them into thinking beings; and subsequently for interweaving the moral line which will turn them into rational agents. Kant's syncretic model of reason demands the stacked substrate of intuition-understanding upon which imagination can operate; schematization encounters itself transformed by the critique, imagination turned towards reason, a newly free reason because self-governed — regulated by the higher-order principles which it itself provides. —What is the (metaphysical) sun that shines in order that we may see the syllogism? A glistening (algorithmic) ocean; and a transcendental journey by which one *follows* the syllogism. —We wish once again to make a voyage. But the subject that follows the syllogism emerges another. We are in flight on a line of cognitive self-modeling and modification; until death or forgetting overtake us. (The syllogism is almost incidentally the way we know our death with inarguable certainty.)

3.

The cosmic quest of reason. Critique and experimental crucible, the crisis of thinking... —Critique isolates truth–programs by performing deductions of problematic points in the plane: normalizing the exterior points at infinity of God and genesis (and neutralizing the interior infinitives of the soul and freedom...) The intractable points are also transcendental clues of an outside (the birth of the cosmos, the involution of the soul, the strange alienation of human freedom... and Judgment.) The critique demands we cease the attempt to directly establish a connection (through reason alone...) to transcendence or immanence; Kant's answer to the skeptics is *entirely symmetrical* to that of the dogmatics... —Kant famously leaves *room* for faith. The space of reason cannot attempt to incorporate directly a living–space for the divine (the paradoxical architectures of the direct–connection–to–transcendence result in a tower of Babel, which skepticism could not fell but would have to wait until the Skywreck of critical philosophy. —To each his own rational habitation on the plane, constructed with the sharpest tools one can find or create, utilizing a new 'idiomatic' architecture whose design the first critique inaugurates. Rational construction tests at every step; every notion is provisional, conditionalized. Following the transcendental demands we are capable of recognizing the illusions peculiar to the use of reason, avoiding in our ratiocination both the skeptical abyss and dogmatic heavens. *Set aside all first–order claims* (the tribunal demands.) What is relevant are your transcendental lines. —Reason may become a calm surface (in which ideas may unfold safely and take part in an ongoing synthesis.) Here is an aspect of the key problematic again: what guarantees this *continuity* of conceptual genesis; what contracts its momenta into a singularity, from which an infinite interiority follows — i.e. the conditional structures of experience–in–itself. But how should the plane be smoothed so that it may support these constructions? What ought to condition the internal structure of the schema? It is not enough to introduce a system of transformations; new machinery must be activated, plugged into an outside. The schema must relate to clear premises and permit an 'internal' flight towards ever–higher principles; as well as a descent towards dynamically unfolding consequences; there is a *critical regulation or delimitation of (the possible structure of) transcendental schema themselves*. Is this perhaps the two–phase engine of critical philosophy: imagination engenders schema; reason elaborates and regulates these structures? Extracting transcendental lines and rectifying the schema in turn. This is one of the key dynamisms of the critique: table–creation. Consider these operations that the tables try to capture: (iterative) categoreal unfolding, (as activated by) spacetime morphisms. (Almost a model of generation of synthetic experience? The psychonautics of the critical voyage...) Kant in his way offers countless warnings about the plane and the illusions it engenders. Grant yourself enough caution to safeguard the critical experimentation of reason on itself, from veering either into crippling doubt or pious obedience. The voyage of thought always risks the vortices of the problematic points, succumbing to the dialectical illusions that haunt the plane. The epic quest of reason, navigating carefully to avoid the involutions of the plane, where spacetime and the categories are in fusion or flight; these black holes of consciousness, culture, communication... It is these transcendental unifications themselves which are endlessly self–dividing, generating hallucinatory 'double–articulated' extensions of exteriority into the middle, operating both through a transcendent figure establishing external relations and contracting unified points (representation); and as immanent forces conditioning and mutating these points, discovering higher–order conjunctions (expression).

4.

Long slumber. Kant's dream of chronological simplicity was shattered by Hume. His former dogmatic physicalism was made uninhabitable. While Kant would never become an outright skeptic, a return to dogmatism was impossible. Hence, the dual critique of dogmatic and skeptic, on behalf of rational freedom. (—But there are so many approaches to this conflict; so many directions such a critical synthesis might take...) Kant perhaps uses the notion/condition of consistency (truth–conservation...) in order to find a tiny escape–route out from the battlefield of philosophy. He needs a strategy to navigate the war. Although it was born from the consciousness

of the insufficiency of physics to answer metaphysical problems, the critical philosophy is nevertheless still quite indebted to Newtonianism -- to the abstract problems of motion and pure translation, i.e., the 'materialism' of physical and geometrical principles. —There is a reality-principle at work in Kant, a lingering commitment to empiricism — but with a critical distance, a desire not to permit the empirical to over-determine the structure of the problems of pure metaphysics...

5.

Flying machines. The critical is at once cosmological and civilizational. —Cosmic because expressing an ambition of thought, yearning towards voyage and desire for external relations... The universal spontaneity of speculation, metaphysics, philosophy. Thought has (something like an innate?) desire for the air of the outdoors; beckoning sea-air, rarefied mountain-air. —Civic because the critical is a cybernetic self-modeling of thinking by which thinking may iteratively improve and refine itself. These iterations are composed of experimental operations extracting transcendental lines, in order to orient cognitive-navigational determinations. (What is critical democracy? But we already know; the shape of democracy-to-come was to be in the Kantian image: the critical experiment in self-governing grounded in rational civic self-knowledge; this dreaming that for so many and for so long would be a nightmare, e.g., for women, minorities, etc.) Perhaps we can therefore imagine also a molecular cruciality: a nano-critique, intensively mapping the logico-aesthetic diagrams engendered or supported by a material flow; a counter-transcendental line, with experiments yielding flows of transcendental particles, or (equivalently) emitting waves, a tiny flux of thoughts. The differential continuity of synthesis. Thinking is a sea of pure cognitive amplitudes, belonging to no one. —It is maybe worth mentioning in this context the relationship between Kant and Leibniz, and to suggest why it is so important for Kant to *answer* Leibniz — perhaps Kant here senses the minoritarian or infinitesimal transformations upending from within all the figures of the tribunal, and finally the tribunal itself (replacing it with a kind of computer...?) --The form of the antinomy posits a simultaneity of successive accounts, expressing a minimal critical operation of dyad-contraction and singularity-formation — apparently two operations which are unified, ordered-together, placed into simultaneity... Reciprocal causation within the faculties, within cultures. The mechanism of generic unification is opposed to the immanent as much as to the transcendent; rather constructing a transcendental line which convokes the transfiguration of transcendence and immanence, positing them as derived features of a higher politics of thought, aspects of a thought-image which accompanies a civilization.

6.

Proof by isometry. How might reason be designed *otherwise*? (Are there other lines along which an alien or future reason might unfold?) —Reason is provisional and engaged in a continuous refactoring of itself, in modification of premises and structures. With each experiment, the identity of the reasoner is transformed, they become otherwise, they learn something new; they advance along transcendental lines: either they reconstruct the habitation on the plane, or they rectify the topology of the plane itself (smoothing or striating, imposing flat uniformity or extruding mobile diagrams...) Reason as auto-alienating machinery: a self-moving engine operating reflexively upon its own conditions. There is absolutely no guarantee of safe passage here. The end of Kant's voyage is a disappointment compared with the fanfare of its outset; its promise of squaring the philosophical circle once and for all, of finding a sure path to the End, isolating the ordered lines conjoining minds and bodies... Instead the system becomes dynamic. It is open onto a circuit of experimentation. Disciplines are plugged into one another to form grand architectures of reason, in which the central tribunal operates as router, switchboard, isomorpher; guarantor of smoothing/flattening. Transcendental equalization, metaphysical neutralization.

7.

The light in which the light is seen. Kant devises new strategies for reaching the universal, the necessary. But why are these strategies themselves necessary? This is Nietzsche's question to Kant — granted synthetic a priori knowledge to be *possible*; why is it *needful*? —An obscure disaster conditions or engenders the critical philosophy; this philosophy which moves, pieces-together a case, in the wake of skywreck... It is as though when all the blows of the dogmatists and skeptics have played out, and we have reached the final end of history, that the critical philosophy finally *rewinds*: passing backwards through the entire line in an instant, *forestalling* the endless conflict. (Synthesis unfolds the *most general* dialogic of an externalized relation: this moment and the last; succession and iterability; being and becoming, etc.) Critique contracts dyads into singularities and performs a deduction of the *idea* underlying the fold which conditions the dialectical illusion (perhaps it takes a motivated reason to *follow* the syllogisms in this direction, towards presumptions about the real.) This (critical fold) founds a new philo-cognitive architecture in the wake of the destruction of the tower of pre-critical reason (which skepticism had never 'really' accomplished, since it was unable to reach the transcendental 'beyond' transcendence; it was *not careful enough* in the encounter with its own immanence...) —The condemnation of the tower stems from the annihilation of *direct connection* to either transcendence or immanence. Now instead we conjoin or disjoin through a higher-dimensional manifold, an *enriched substrate* capable of supporting the conditional operation of transcendental lines. Thus, after the collapse, the enchanted dawn; a world illuminated by the critical light of a transcendental sun. There is an absolutely unconditioned upstream of every syllogism, through which every proposition may be genealogized; all syllogisms link together. This apeiron is thus a lodestar for the critical navigator, who is otherwise adrift on the open sea of algorithms. The transcendental sun of the unconditioned: a hypothesis, an instrument for measuring the wavelength of the potentiating light which emanates from the indeterminate within the formal machine of reason. Despite the foreclosure of direct access to the problematic points, this long labor of establishing the parameters of the universal Plane of reason activates potentials for critical (re)construction, according to self-given plans, at once regulating practice and subjecting even its *own* procedures to examination and experimentation.

8.

Compossibility. The wordless sight of pure reason (like the wordless sight of geometry.) What could the mechanism of transcendental effectuations be? Where is the radically-external source of this impossible resonance? The case is not dismissed so much as shelved; left all-but-closed. The problem hangs in suspense throughout the work; its problematicity only grows throughout the gradual assembly of the structure of reason, which finds itself unable to rely on either transcendent (dogmatic) or immanent (skeptical) principles. Rather these principles are ironically shown derivative of higher-order 'conditioning' principles, natural illusions of the plane... Yet the work finally only exists within this suspense, which indeed it really does not resolve; the critical exists *only in this fiction*, this detective scenario wherein the transcendental crime has a source: a criminal who must be tracked down, cautiously investigated; shaken loose. *Who* could have awoken a pure metaphysical sense in us? How could philosophy ever gain the sure footing of geometry and physics? The universality and necessity of Kant's account of cognition stems from its detachment from empirical coordinates; rather it wants to know the structure of phenomena in general. The critical philosophy extracts the transcendental, and is concerned only with the conditions of possibility of experience, achieving a generic ideality... Pure reason ends up tearing metaphysics apart, desperately seeking a way out. —Instead of some concrete body of metaphysical evidence, we are given transcendental clues; and a program for intellection operating on legalistic principles. Critical reason offers thinking a new capability: that of neutralizing first-

order metaphysics, smoothing the plane for rational motion by identifying the undecidability of a problematic point; constructing both sides of the argument, so deriving an inconsistency result (at the singularity or point of infinite curvature which permits conflicting traversals.)

9.

Isocline. The affect of the transcendental, the Kant effect; the material curvature of time, a specific topological inflection imparted by the vertiginous transcendental line. In the preface to his book on Kant, Deleuze remarks on the 'giddiness' of the subject divided by the unity of apperception: a thread of time which continually divides the individual from themselves, present from past; which is finally overlaid by a *moral* thread; the cosmos transfigured by guilt. —Pure reason guides itself along a transcendental thread which orients thought and makes it 'accessible' at every point. In order to synthesize, critical reason must have erected axiom-systems, tables of transcendental forces, fourfold schematics to flatten the universal and necessary onto metaphysics. Were these tables 'caught' in the middle of a process of becoming-diagrams? The transcendental or this movement-without-movement which consumes entire worlds whole.

10.

In critical philosophy there is an internalization of the law; the tribunal expresses reason in glory, but also in judgment.

11.

The sense of a transcendental condition is that which is universal and necessary prior to any possible object: formalization as de-specification.

12.

Kant endorses a realism about the universe, despite his foreclosure of metaphysical knowledge of ultimate reality. —He envies on behalf of philosophy the clearly universal and necessary access to truth unfolded by geometric construction and physical law. The successive tables of categories, notions and ideals are structured like a stacked system of hierarchical physical forces, each layer depending on valid combinations of elements from the one beneath. The structure of knowledge is systematic and ideally syllogistic; this image of reason is opposed to that of subjective-association — this condition of the transcendental is close to the heart of the realist core of the critique, which wishes philosophy would restrain itself from first-order claims in order to enjoy (on the transcendental plane of pure reason) a similar certainty and sure-footedness as geometry and physics enjoy. Metaphysics at higher dimensions. The first critique presents itself as a mission of peace — on the one hand, to give philosophy clarity on its limitations regarding claims to first-order knowledge of reality; on the other, to give science space from the imposing imaginations of the philosophers, permitting it to reason out empirical laws for itself through experiment. Pure reason is presented as the means of achieving confidence in facing dogmatists and skeptics — here the problem is not simply that their first-order pronouncements could never touch the noumena anyway, but rather that the debates about *specific* first-order metaphysical questions, the swirling dissensus around the singularities, follows from the transcendental structure of experience; and pure reason, critical reason, can isolate these structuring lines, permitting careful synthesis and traversal. At any rate: we are equipped not to fear the arguments of metaphysicians presuming to know reality, or those presuming it is entirely ineffable. We can seek truth on our own terms, directly with our own reason, conducting our own experiments. We need only the critical regulation of transcendental lines, which smooth over the problematic singularities puncturing the plane. Perhaps philosophy is encouraged to a practice of universe construction;

knowing more clearly, and using with more subtlety, the affects which their hypotheses and axioms engender, the way our concepts plug into a transindividual matrix. A calmer, more sober reason, despite the wild freedom of the open horizon. The commitment to the adventure of critical thinking demands a detachment, perhaps especially to navigate around dialectical vortexes, to deal confidently with the fantasies that haunt the plane; to ensure smooth synthesis around asperities and difficult points.

13.

First: the infrastructure of intuition (categories and spacetime reciprocally conditioning phenomenal possibilities); next the superstructure of understanding (notions enfolding category-spacetime dyads into points); finally, the 'hyper-structure' of pure reason, the architecture of transcendental ideas (treating the notions as waypoints.) The categories exist in order to make orderly divisions in the flux of experience/thinking. The transcendental axes of spacetime and the categories must themselves be decomposed along their hinges, subjected to a deduction in turn. In fact Kant's solution was a program we are still enacting: the critical philosophy, which would spur reason to inquire about the nature of spacetime and the categories in new ways (finally in its *own way*.)

14.

There are necessary distortions of the plane that any rational thinker will experience as they attempt to navigate (with) their own reason. And reason will always, necessarily, be open to error, so long as it possesses imagination — this free power of composition of the notions it possesses. The long error, for Kant, is perhaps mistaking subjective association (connection) for an objective determination of conjunction (implication of causality.) The transcendental ego invests the problematic points around whose limits form inevitable dualities, engendering a field of differential postures (for the dialectic to sophisticate...) Enfolding the 'ends' of the universe or the soul, the transcendental cuts a line to the edge of the real; every turn away from the contour of this thread falls into darkness and illusion. There are necessary illusions of the plane of reason, indicating conditional limits of metaphysics. Critical reason constructs a tribunal capable of neutral arbitration of the rival claims of the contending dogmatics and skeptics. —One may recognize the critical philosophy by the establishment of a courthouse of reason — tribunals which not only legislate ideas and differentiate theories by experiment, but *principally regulate practical matters*, weaving plots together to collectively create programs, law-tables, world-systems; all the ordered sets of structured explanations which are necessary for rational freedom.

15.

Reason must be made the object of a design practice. (A future science of thought-images.)

16.

Selection by division. A synthesis communicates an abyss of time, contracting an infinite multiplicity and externalizing it into a problematic point on the plane of reason: as a singularization (finally subjectivation). The first critique recognizes the loneliness of the 'void inane' beyond spacetime, or at its limits (or at the boundary of black holes.) Perhaps Kant knows something about the sad workshops in the depths of the cyclonic signifying points (god/soul/genesis/freedom). Does criticism detect the *weariness* of the dialectical trade (the interminable war between philosophies)? Critical reason constructs legal edifices for the evaluation of philosophical claims, in order to place Philosophy on trial in turn. Critical philosophy discovers

or creates a pure mode of intellection by which religion and philosophy at once may be challenged. Neither affirmation nor denial may pass the tribunal; every notion is made to become analytical.

17.

The critical passage seems smoothed in advance, but it also incorporates a superabundance of caution, even as it begins to catalogue the interference mechanisms by which the problematic points will diffract the plane of thinking.

18.

It is in the last section of the first critique, on Transcendental Doctrine, that Kant uses the image of the Tower of Babel to describe the monolith of metaphysical thought. Humanity had constructed an edifice of Reason stretching to the heavens. A tower divided logically against itself and built along paradoxical architectures. Kant proposes another kind of architecture than either the skeptic or dogmatist, based on a system of (transcendental) principles capable of resolving the deadlock. Each of us may now safely build a habitation suitable for ourselves. The critical philosophy wrecks the connection to heaven; the transcendent link lies in ruins. The next image in the work is the courthouse, the seat of the tribunal (condemners of both the Tower and the Plane...) Instead of the transcendent, the transcendental formalization of a plane of reason. The critical properties of the plane are offered as a solution to the crisis of metaphysics: how to find sure footing? Kant shows the characteristic distortion and inconsistencies attending problematic points, constructing a kind of map of the limits of reason. These transcendental lines are clues, and already in the shape of the solution: they are how metaphysics can become a subject which may be assured of this maximal move of the always (i.e., fulfilling the universality and necessity conditions by opening onto a higher-dimensional space.)

19.

The problem of motion in the transcendental dialectic, and the regulative movement of the critical philosophy; how to sum up this moebius loop? If we characterize the analytic as categoreal-spatiotemporal, the dialectic is perhaps fusional — a theory of planes and navigational practices (cautious modal extension, conceptual assembly.) Kant wants to give reason a new architecture, a new science of house-building; to give a rectified logic of dwelling within the plane of reason. This new constructional logic unfolds like a cataclysm (wrecking the skies...)

20.

Kant models dialectical problems as combinations, categoreal-spatiotemporal conjunctions or disjunctions. —This modeling demands the suspension of first-order metaphysical axioms; and perhaps here Kant even provides a sketch of incompleteness and inconsistency "proofs" for metaphysics, noting the mounting incoherence of the philosophers as they approach the singularities; the way the problematic points unfolded philosophy in turn, diffracting it.

21.

Kant wants to build houses for reason along transcendental lines — neither arcing towards transcendent heights nor drawing towards immanent depths; but rather building directly upon the smoothed surface of the plane of reason.

22.

The new image of reason will be the Tribunal — a speculative court or philosophical council. The trial is a game of laws and rules, where only higher-order claims, transcendental conditions of the case, may be admitted into evidence.

23.

The tribunal is a filter, a crucible of selection. The jurist must find or make a transcendental mixture, discover the hypothetical line which passes beyond both (dogmatic yea or skeptic nay).

24.

What is the syllogism? A mechanism of binding language to a world, a strategy of co-determination. —The critical philosophy is a loop of tangled circuitry (logical and spatiotemporal). Kant constructs a black hole computer using Newtonian physics (Longo has an interesting paper exploring the possibility of building a Turing Machine from clocks...) The transcendental line condenses an infinite series into an image, a unitary figure. The real lightning-quick movement of the critique: the folding-up of the series, contraction into event, a contraction which is also transcendental unity; in its way already consciousness and culture, a minimal auto-sophisticating structure capable of enfolding timelines. The dialectical problems are caught up with a-causality, a point outside of time; and Kant demonstrates the apparent ambiguity of these points — for what could be outside the series, yet exercise power it, over 'all' of it?

25.

Will to reason. There is a movement of power in the critique — how can thought augment itself, make its steps more sure, its synthesis more coherent, determinate, sustained? Certainly not by direct assertion or denial, the critical philosophy suggests; but rather through taking a step back, discovering a critical distance. Foucault calls it "undoubtedly something like an ethos" of the Enlightenment: critical experimentation with your own composition. We must know, as Nietzsche says, not only what our arguments *are*, "for" and "against"; but also the inner movements of these arguments, the affects they generate, the characteristic dynamisms they engender (as symptoms which can be analyzed.) --In universality we conceive the instantaneous traversal of all of space; the concept is thereby suffused into existence at the level of necessity...

26.

Who wants the truth of the case? There are all the figures of a courthouse drama in Kant. But perhaps most interesting is that of the philosopher-as-investigator of metaphysical crimes, the transcendental *detective* who supplies advocates with their stories and evidences. —The detective works with officers of the court, but is really unlike them, since he is looking for something else entirely, or from a different direction. Everyone knows the bare facts of the case; the question is what story we should tell about them. The detective is after the conditions generating the structure of these stories: the transcendental sense of the case. He is looking for something that escapes the law; wanting to discover whether it broke through it or broke down; not *what story correlates with these facts* but *what hidden system of writing structures these stories*. (For instance, the novelistic question "What happened?" stages a dramatic retelling or explication; it also smooths space or flattens time, in order to contract the sense into a pure figure.) There's all the mystery of a detective novel in the first critique. At first the case presented as the seemingly straightforward problem: where does synthetic knowledge a priori come from? Who or what has committed this transcendental crime of connecting thought with the outside? But of course the case quickly becomes one of regulating thinking, even demonstrating in a way that the crime never could have taken place — it was only thought to have taken place due to certain errors in

reasoning, dialectical illusions. A crime that disappears when you don't philosophize it. The case quickly takes a turn: it becomes a problem of safely inhabiting the rectified plane, of constructing a rational habitation according to new self-given principles. Becoming worthy of this critical freedom, of the *freedom in thinking*: this dare accompanies injunctions, warnings about respecting our own limits (the limits of any rational creature...) We meditate on limits, in a way that transforms us. (Watching for the warning buoys around dangerous points in the sea.) The tribunal as a lawful filter, a process of selection. The thought that can pass the trial of reason is one that dispenses with direct assertion or denial, and instead favors this indirect elaboration of the conditions of the case. In a way it's interesting how little Kant dramatizes his problems; his detachment appears so total (as though he knows the constitution of the transcendental line depends in some way on his sobriety.) But suffice to say the work as a whole is not a syllogism. Rather it is building a machine that conceptualizes the syllogism as apotheosis of reason. Spacetime and the categories are formatted for the dialectical role they will play; being set into a system where they activate each other reciprocally... —Consider the ancient method of division: analytically decomposing the case into various possible classes, then subdividing these, until you've constructed an identity by hierarchy. Philosophy as decision-tree; there's a lot of dangers in this formal-material game. Yet perhaps it is in doing this analytic operation that one creates or discovers problems that move between the species and the genera; problems which involve pure morphological-organizational powers, operating along transcendental lines.

27.

The critical sense detaches: it steps away from direct affirmation or denial. Neither bare affirmation nor denial are legal operations of critical reason. The tribunal is not just concerned with condemning the tower, but promulgating new building codes. The possibilities of construction have to change, and even what that construction aims for as well. Both the earth and the skies are under our governance: we have to take responsibility from the depths to the heights of reason; since reason also engenders these concepts that transform and distort the plane. There's a practice of world-creation in the critique, even if the method appears subtractive.

28.

Are we working case by case, seeking to find (discover) and never jumping to simply label phenomena this or that? Are we seeking lines that traverse all of spacetime at once?

29.

The criticality of the critical philosophy has to do with the design and execution of experiments in order to verify or exemplify universal principles (laws). Transcendental idealism demands that the critical method be deployed even as a crucible of thinking: the trial of pure reason. Who is on trial? Not the individual, who is represented perhaps in the officers of the court — the metaphysical prosecution and defense. The real subject of the trial is always some new philosophical argument, which is compelled to speak the formal language of the court (to smooth its distinctions...)

30.

Fusion and the unconditioned. There is a becoming-crucial at the heart of the critique, the movement of freedom of thought, which opens onto a generalized practice of self-guided experimentation. With respect to reason this process forms a circuit: auto-construction of identity, which attaches relentlessly to every thought. Every effort at alienation merely distends this loop. A crisis, a crucial moment must occur; the appearance of a fascinating sign which occasions thinking, an awakening or daybreak. How to escape the circle of the sea? (How to ascend via

syllogism towards the transcendental sun?) Any division of power into genera is also an exponentiation; every isolation of a property ends up collecting and accumulating what analysis divided. —The indeterminate escapes into the empirical.

Afterword

The critique is a matrix of self-experimentation, a generalized program of auto-sophistication; the transcendental science of mind. The plane of concepts has been made to operate as a sort of variable membrane, a filter through which a luminous singularity is made to directionally pass: downstream towards the consequences, upstream towards less and less conditioned principles, whose limit can only be the unconditioned.

Philosophy as a solar-conversion machine. A transcendental sun illuminates the plotwork of the rational plane, emanating waves of abstraction (ontological de-conditioning.)

Kant wanted a legalistic principle of critical distinction, capable of deciding between metaphysical accounts, based on principles whose universality and necessity would be inarguable. In Kant's convocation of the tribunal, there is indeed a transcendental linearization of *the case of thinking*, the extraction of axioms and formation of an operating system of relations: the construction of a program of reason itself. —What really *are* these alienating powers of entailment and hypothesis? But maybe the more urgent problem is how to safely *operate* them, given all the dangers inherent in a line of experimentation.

Reason is a dark cloud of consequences, pierced by the higher light of the principle. Synthetic fusion operates through propositions and pure dynamisms, *experiencing* the haphazard collection of consequences as synthesis approaches universal constructibility, or... Flight through principles towards the unconditioned sun, aiming towards the transcendental edge. —The contraction of the manifold (a multiplicity) is a transcendental voyage in-place through every position in the series at once. The successive cases of dogma and skeptic are mixed into solution in a critical hyperchamber which preserves and extracts transcendental lines. The conservation of laws of reason: Kant seeks *homeostatic valves* for the operation of the rational machinery of synthesis. (We may dream that rationality will instead be unfolded, decoded, re-articulated into species of laughter, into joyous autoscience to come.)

The glory of the transcendental sun which exceeds our categories and invests spacetime with a new significance... Kant's room for faith is also *making room for philosophy* — for the critical philosophy in particular, articulating its space within the metaphysical order: an enchanted philosophy of transcendental lines... The transcendental line is like a glorious solar body which entices us to become a thought-particle, to traverse the field with infinite rapidity, to embark upon a journey without duration. Let us space, let's voyage-in-place. (Deconstruct and deterritorialize the image of thinking...) But keep wary: especially when you may be in enemy territory. Remember all the warnings; know your limits. There are dangers at sea, even in these verdant isles.